

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I rise to discuss concerns with S. 47, legislation we will soon be voting on in the House of Representatives.

Madam Speaker, S. 47 has some positive things in it. The legislation provides for expanded recreational opportunities, expanded opportunities to hunt and fish on our public lands, and a lot of things that I very much support.

Madam Speaker, the bill has some pretty profound flaws, one of which being process. This is a 700-page bill—a 700-page bill—that has been held at the desk. It has not gone through the regular committee process.

This isn't some small bill that folks have been exposed to. This is 700 pages of text, and it has not gone through the regular legislative process and, in fact, is being put up under suspension of the rules, where we are not even being provided the opportunity to offer amendments or to represent our constituents, other than just voting "yes" or "no."

Madam Speaker, I want to throw out some statistics on what this bill does and the implications. It provides 1.3 million acres of land being designated as wilderness areas—1.3 million acres; 694 acres of recreation and conservation areas; 370,000 acres of mineral withdrawals; national monument designations of 2,500 acres; 621 miles of wild and scenic rivers; 2,600 miles added to the national trail system; and 42,000 acres added to our national parks.

Now, Madam Speaker, I used to teach outdoor wilderness courses. I have spent hundreds, maybe even thousands of nights of my life in the outdoors, sleeping out in the wilderness areas, national parks, and national forests and others. I love these areas. I enjoy them.

I am not saying that these things shouldn't happen. I am saying that we need to have the ability to go through regular order, just like the Senate did this week when they had the ability to offer amendments to this bill. We are not being afforded that same opportunity.

Madam Speaker, my biggest problem or concern with this legislation is this: The bill permanently reauthorizes the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which, I will say it again: I support the acquisition of lands, the protection of lands, so we can enjoy the ecological productivity and enjoy time in the great outdoors. However, the bill does not address the fact that we have a \$17 billion backlog in national park maintenance—\$17 billion. So we are acquiring more land without a plan for addressing the existing backlog maintenance issues that actually prohibit or prevent people from enjoying some of these same lands that are being acquired.

We are talking about the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and \$9 billion in funds over the next 10 years being deposited into a Treasury receipt account to acquire more land. Guess where this money is coming from,

Madam Speaker. A hundred percent of these funds is coming from the State that I represent and the other five States that produce offshore energy. Every penny of it is coming from the State of Louisiana, which produces perhaps over 80 percent of all the offshore energy of this Nation in Federal waters. It is paying for this fund.

At the same time, we have lost 2,000 square miles—2,000 square miles—of our coast. Guess how much of this bill addresses the problem there? With 2,000 square miles of our coast disappearing, the ecological productivity being lost, the increased vulnerability to the people that I represent, zero, nothing. This bill diverts money for conservation and for protection in other States in other areas and does nothing for my home State of Louisiana, yet it is coming from our revenues that we are producing in our offshore.

This is a flawed process. This is a flawed bill. We need to go through regular order.

I really can't even believe that this is happening. Here we have dozens of hearings on climate change and other things, and the very State that is the canary in the coal mine, the State that is experiencing the worst ecological challenges or losses as a result of sea rise and other challenges, is being completely ignored.

Where are the climate change advocates right now? Where are you?

I strongly urge opposition to this bill. We need to go back through regular order, consider the largest conservation and the largest natural resources bill that we have had since I have been in the Congress, and send it through regular order again.

I urge opposition to this bill.

STATEHOOD FOR DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, tomorrow, our residents who are fortunate to live in our Nation's Capital will come to the Capitol as part of their Lobby Day to ask the Congress to pass the D.C. statehood bill.

Most Americans are unaware that the Americans who live in their Nation's Capital have the fewest rights of any Americans. That is at the same time that those 700,000 residents who live in the Nation's Capital pay the highest taxes per capita, higher than the taxes of the residents of any State.

As you might imagine, the residents of the District of Columbia are seeking to become the 51st State of the Union. I am pleased that already almost 90 percent of Democrats are on our D.C. statehood bill. I am grateful to Senator CARPER, who will soon introduce this same bill on the Senate side.

There are many reasons that no Americans should fail to have equal rights if they pay equal taxes. But

surely, service in every war the Nation has fought, even beyond being first per capita in Federal income taxes, should qualify the 700,000 residents of the District of Columbia for equal treatment as the 51st State.

On this poster, we see why any State would stand for its rights: World War I, more casualties of people who live in the District of Columbia than three States; the Korean war, more casualties than those of eight States; World War II, casualties are more than four States; and the Vietnam war, casualties that outnumber those in 10 States.

The residents of the District of Columbia will be here to say to my colleagues that 200-plus years—it is about 218 years now—without equal rights is 218 years too many.

Nobody who lives in our country and pays taxes should be unrepresented on this floor when votes are taken. I appreciate that I can now vote for the District of Columbia in the Committee of the Whole, where some votes are taken. But District resident have no representation on this floor and none in the Senate at all.

It is past time to right this wrong. We cannot do it for those who have died in war for our country. We can certainly do it in their memory.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 41 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR) at noon.

PRAYER

Pastor A.D. Shaw, Shekinah Glory Cathedral Church of God in Christ, Plant City, Florida, offered the following prayer:

God of infinity and sovereignty and redeemer of humanity, grace us with Your mercy, as this 116th United States Congress forges the future of America.

Cover the distressed and despondent, too often forgotten and manipulated, with unceasing care.

Shelter the children of this Nation from the destructive silence and sins of their predecessors. Grant unto them courage and fortitude to be affirming and inclusive of all.

Reclaim us to Your peace and unity, that we may truly be one Nation under God, the Nation known as the melting pot of the world.

Therefore, redeem the soul of this Nation, and bequeath unto us wisdom, mercy, and love, that we may all encounter heaven on Earth.